

**COPY**Rule 3(d) Continuing Prosecution  
Appln. of U.S. Serial No. 09/246,691

12. (Amended) The process according to claim 23, wherein the anionic clay is subjected to an ion-exchange treatment.

14. (Twice Amended) The process according to claim 23, wherein metals or non-metals are deposited on the anionic clay.

15. (Twice Amended) The process for the preparation of Al-Mg-containing solid solution and/or spinel, comprising subjecting an anionic clay obtained by the processes of claim 23 to a heat-treatment at a temperature between 300 and 1200°C.

Please add new claims 23-25 as follows:

--23. A process for the preparation of anionic clays corresponding to the general formula



wherein m and n have a value such that m/n = 1 to 10, b has a value in the range of from 0 to 10, and  $\text{X}_{n/2}^{z-}$  may be  $\text{CO}_3^{2-}$ ,  $\text{OH}^-$ , or any other anion present in the interlayers of the anionic clays, which process comprises reacting an aluminum source and a magnesium source in aqueous suspension at a temperature above 100°C and at a pressure above atmospheric pressure to obtain an anionic clay, the aluminum source comprising two types of aluminum-containing compounds, wherein the first type of aluminum-containing compound is either aluminum trihydrate or its thermally treated form and wherein

(a) when the first type of aluminum-containing compound is aluminum trihydrate, the second type of aluminum-containing compound is selected from the group consisting of aluminum sols, thermally treated aluminum trihydrate, aluminum gels, pseudoboehmite, boehmite, aluminum nitrate, aluminum chloride and aluminum chlorohydrate, and